

Secretary Jewell Arrives at Interior



By Dan DuBray
Chief of Public Affairs
Commissioner's Office

Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell walked up the main steps of Interior to a crowd on the steps of the C Street entrance. Unlike her predecessors, she walked to work today, from the West. She stopped to shake hands with those of us from Reclamation (including Commissioner Connor and Assistant Secretary for Water and Science Anne Castle) and other agencies that waited on the steps for her. She was very gracious to all of us. She spent some time greeting two mounted Park Police officers who stood guard at the site.

She was met inside the C Street lobby by a crowd of a few hundred DOI employees. She was introduced by Deputy Secretary David Hayes, who described her as "an outdoors enthusiast and a fitness nut" who he suggested would help inspire all of us to get into better shape.



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During her brief remarks, she said that during her years as a petroleum engineer, a banker and as the CEO of REI, she often encountered DOI employees in the field and found them very helpful and informative. She praised the work Interior employees do, saying it was some of the most important work in the Federal government. She particularly mentioned the Department's important role in carrying out its trust responsibilities to Native Americans and Alaska Natives.

She emphasized a point Deputy Secretary Hayes made in his remarks, pointing to REI's reputation as being one of the nation's best places to work. The outdoors company has made Fortune Magazine's list as one of the 100 best places to work since 1998. She has been fortunate in her career, she said, to always have enjoyed coming to work. She has such a goal for the employees of the Department and referred several times to the importance of our work but the need to have fun while carrying out our responsibilities. She also took issue with the negative characterization of Federal employees which has emerged in recent years, saying she valued the work ethic and professionalism of the Department's employees.

She will address an all-employees meeting at the Interior Department on Thursday afternoon.

[Sally Jewell Gets to Work as Secretary of the Interior](#)



Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, Interior Solicitor Hilary Tompkins, and Interior Secretary Sally Jewell
Photo: Tami A. Heilemann - Office of Communications



Secretary Jewell addresses Interior employees inside the Udall Building's C St. Entrance. - Photo: Tami A. Heilemann - Office of Communications

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Provo Reservoir Canal Enclosure Project Celebrates Project Completion



The Percheron Ambassadors of Ames Construction, Inc. arrives at the celebration.

By Paul Christensen
Manager, Field Engineering Division I
Upper Colorado Region

On Friday, April 5 Reclamation participated in a celebration marking the completion of the Provo Reservoir Canal Enclosure Project. The celebration was sponsored by Provo River Water Users Association (PRWUA), project-funding stakeholders, construction contractors Ames Construction and W.W. Clyde, and other project participants. Senator Orin Hatch was a featured speaker, along with Utah County Commissioner Larry Ellertson, PRWUA General Manager Keith Denos, and Ames Construction Regional Vice President Mark Brennan. Other



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state and local officials were also in attendance.

The celebration commemorated a monumental effort to enclose the Provo Reservoir Canal (also known as the Murdock Canal) with a 126-inch diameter welded steel pipeline. Construction began in the fall of 2010, but Reclamation has been involved with efforts to make the project a reality for the better part of a decade.

The enclosed canal increases safety for residents of Utah County in communities through which the open canal once flowed, saves water previously lost to seepage and evaporation, and improves water quality for downstream users. Enclosure of the canal also allows for additional in-stream flows in the Provo River for mitigation efforts for the endangered June Sucker. Provo River Water Users Association has operation and maintenance responsibility for the Provo Reservoir Canal, and was the sponsor for the Enclosure Project. Other funding participants included Central Utah Water Conservancy District (CUWCD), Jordan Valley Water Conservancy District (JVWCD), Metropolitan Water District of Salt Lake and Sandy (MWDSLS), and Provo Reservoir Water Users Company. The Provo Area Office was responsible for construction oversight on the project. Provo and Regional Office financial specialists also worked closely with the project partners to keep a complex funding stream for the 150 million-dollar project flowing without a hitch. Other groups in the Provo Area Office and Regional Office also played key roles in support of the project.

The new pipeline runs approximately 21 ½ miles, from the Murdock Diversion at the mouth of Provo Canyon to a newly constructed flow control structure at the Point of the Mountain. An 84-inch parallel siphon was also installed next to the existing Olmstead siphon at the mouth of Provo Canyon, providing redundancy and additional capacity for the pipeline. In addition to the large flow control structure at the Point of the Mountain, a flow control structure was constructed at the turnout to MWDSLS's Point of the Mountain



Aqueduct, and roughly 40 additional turnout structures were installed along the length of the pipeline, all automated for remote actuation by operators at Deer Creek Dam or PRWUA's office in Pleasant Grove.

General Contractor Ames Construction essentially completed the pipeline prior to the 2012 irrigation season, a year ahead of schedule, and the pipeline was in full operation last year. Finishing touches on the diversion structure as well as instrumentation and control systems have been completed in the last year.



Photos below



Commissioner Larry Ellertson , Senator Orin Hatch at the podium and PRWUA General Manager Keith Denos



Tree Planting



Upstream view of 126 inch WSP placement



Backfill along pipe looking east from near station 643+00



Northwest Pipeline crew adjusting rotation and travel speed



12-01-2011(DJ) View of the section placed this week

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Thoughts from the Front Office

As I write this, we are all still reeling from the bombings at the Boston Marathon on April 15, 2013. I've been pondering how sad it is that it seems like there are people around who do not want anyone to be happy or enjoy themselves. They are always trying to tear down or ruin things for everyone.

Unfortunately, this sometimes applies in the workplace, too. I've worked with people, and have some family members, who always look at the world from a "glass half empty" point of view. For me, being around people like this is draining and ruins the joy of accomplishment and the happiness of interacting with friends and coworkers. I just want to get away from them as quickly as I can. They seem to delight in bringing people down, gossiping or spreading rumors (always negative ones), and generally being unpleasant to be around.

We have been talking about office culture in our UC Leadership Team Meetings and what we can do as managers to help foster a positive office environment. There will be more to come on this—several of our UCLT members have a keen interest and have joined a team to spend some time working through this issue. We will report more in future UC Today articles or Front Office writings.

In the meantime, I think it is good for all of us to look at ourselves and ask the question—Do I bring a positive and upbeat attitude that helps foster a calm and pleasing environment to the workplace or am I always complaining and seeing /talking about the worst in people? If you tend to be on the negative side, try changing your approach to a more positive one—say something good or provide a compliment to someone, etc. You might be surprised how much better you feel.

If each of us makes a commitment to being a positive rather than a negative force, I believe the workplace would be better for everyone.

Ann

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They Call Him Coach – Cliff Drayton



By Cliff Drayton
Materials Engineer Tech
Four Corners Construction Office

Gerald Clifford Drayton is a Civil Engineering Technician and a 20 year Navy veteran assigned to the Four Corners Construction Office Materials Division in Farmington, New Mexico. The old Navy motto “It’s not just a job, it’s an adventure” just about sums it up. Having gone from navigating air-craft carriers, destroyers, submarines, and conducting anti-piracy operations, to materials engineering has definitely an adventure.



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He has worked as a First-Fill monitor on the Ridges Basin Dam/Lake Nighthorse construction project and multiple FCCO assignments; he currently works as a Laboratory Technician performing materials testing on the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project. At work he goes by “Cliff”, but after work he’s known throughout the Farmington area by athletes, parents, and sponsors as “Coach”.

He is the Special Olympics New Mexico Track and Field coach for San Juan County. With his wife of 14 years Paula Drayton, whom started and developed the Special Olympics program for the nearby city of Bloomfield, he has now also taken on the role of Head Coach of all SONM athletics for the city of Bloomfield, New Mexico which also consists of athletes from the nearby cities of Aztec and Blanco. Cliff and Paula have been involved in Special Olympics since 2010 when their 7 year old son Deuce, whom was diagnosed with autism, became the youngest SONM athlete in New Mexico. They rounded it out and made it a family affair when their 12 year old daughter Sierra became a volunteer to promote a nationwide Special Olympics program called “Project Unified”.



Project Unified pairs non-disability athletes with disabled and special needs athletes in schools around the US to participate in sanctioned sports. This encourages disability awareness in school age students and communities while creating encouragement and positive attitudes in students with disabilities/special needs. Project unified gained nationwide notoriety on the NBC Today Show when a group of cheerleaders at a high school made a female student with Down Syndrome an honorary cheerleader at their final varsity football game which inspired the crowd, whom in turn rallied the team on to a victory. Another example recently seen on the internet is of an autistic student at his final varsity basketball game. His team was down by 12 points and in the final minutes of the game one of his teammates came out of the game so he could play. Needless to say, the young man shocked the crowd by shooting a three-pointer and multiple three-pointers thereafter rallying his team back to an upset victory.



“It’s reasons like this that inspire me to coach Special Olympics” Cliff says. “I feel very blessed to be able to work with such an outstanding organization as the Bureau of Reclamation. Several of my co-workers are also coaches of various Special Olympic sports. It means a lot to my family/me and the state of New Mexico that the Four Corners Construction Office encourages the work we do with the Special Olympics. Cliff states, “My boss and co-workers at the FCCO have been completely supportive and I am extremely thankful for that. It just goes to showing the caliber of personnel that work for the BOR. That’s one of the reasons why I respect them so much and could not consider working for another agency or organization.

There’s no price you can put on the smiles and the joy felt by the athletes and their parents when they compete and win a medal. Knowing my coaching and encouragement caused their winning or placing for a medal from the national Olympic committee leaves me



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speechless. The feeling is indescribable. Hopefully one of my athletes will be selected to go to the national competitions or the international competitions. Until then I'll just keep on training and inspiring them [the athletes] to do their very best, be productive in society, and an inspiration to other athletes. Everyone should live their life by the Special Olympics oath: Let me win, if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt".....

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RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

April 2013
Upper Colorado Region



UC Today

To the Moon and Back - Sort of, for Reclamation Drivers



By Pat Page
Deputy, Construction Engineer
Four Corners Construction Office

Farmington, N.M. – Picture driving to the moon and back – twice – without an accident. Those safe trips totaling a million miles would equal the accomplishments of the Bureau of Reclamation's employees at the Four Corners Construction Office in Farmington, N.M. The mileage total reflects all miles driven, including to very remote locations, often in extreme weather conditions, to work on projects such as the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project.

The last preventable accident was September 12, 2011. Following that, Reclamation employees took the office's safety program to a whole new level. The program, in effect for 15 years, rewards employees for achieving accident-free safety records. To qualify, in addition to accident-free driving, employees must complete a number of mandatory training classes on a wide range of topics appropriate to both construction and office work.

Being that the FCCO crew is largely made up of engineers and other math-savvy people, they couldn't resist further calculating other million-mile equivalents. For example, they drove the same as 40 times around the earth; 204 round trips end-to-end on old Route 66; 10,000 round trips from Farmington to Durango; 4,065 round trips from Farmington to Gallup, and everyone's favorite – but hardest to prove – 1,117 "country waltzes" across Texas.



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On a serious note, the employees have been commended by Reclamation's Regional Director Larry Walkoviak, who said, "Because of the amount of driving we do to extremely remote job locations in all kinds of weather conditions, defensive safe driving is of paramount importance. I am grateful for the extra efforts our employees have put into their tremendous safety record."



Regional Director Larry Walkoviak and Deputy Regional Director Brent Rhees attended the Farmington celebration using VTC.

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RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

April 2013
Upper Colorado Region



UC Today

Dateline: 2013

By Marie Memmer
IT Specialist
Glen Canyon Field Division

Glen Canyon is an interesting place to work. Have you ever looked at a map and found Page? It's kind of isolated, isn't it?? Because of its remoteness, many things someone might take for granted elsewhere are either not available or much harder to accomplish here. And even though we are small and remote, we have the same communications needs of any other or larger office in the region.



5.5 floor comm room



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One major hurdle we are working to improve is communications. The local telephone company is limited in the number of high speed lines they have available to their customers. "T1" capacity lines become available when a company literally goes out of business and frees up the line. Our telephone PBX system requires manual cross connects and programming changes if someone moves from one office to another. And currently, there is no hope of a video tele-conferencing facility because of the lack of high-capacity communication facilities.

We're trying to change all of that. We are in the process of procuring a new phone system. We've analyzed systems and features, and now Acquisitions is doing their part in moving the requisition forward. We are also working with Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) to utilize their microwave system to add wide-area network capabilities and give us the opportunity for better communications and at some time provide us with video tele-conferencing capability.

Future improvements include updating the older microwave communications from the Visitors Center to the Warehouse, about 2.5 miles from our location at the dam. Some options being discussed are joining the City of Page in installation of fiber optics, or installation of a new microwave system.

As you can see, there are many "irons in the fire" and many people working together to get it all done.



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Images of Navajos at the Utah Museum of Fine Art



By Stacey Smith
Communication Specialist
Upper Colorado Region

Now showing at the Utah Museum of Fine Arts (until August 11) on the University of Utah campus is an exhibit titled: *Bierstadt to Warhol: American Indians in the West*. It is highly recommended, particularly if you love the red rock country and Native American cultures of Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico. According to the museum's promo:

"[The exhibit] is an ambitious [undertaking] comprising more than 100 oil paintings, sculptures, and works on paper. . . . It examines depictions of American Indian identity in a diverse array of styles: from the traditional European schools to Modernist abstraction and conceptual renderings of cultural motifs."

Of the 100 artistic representations, approximately 20 depict the Navajo culture and the expansive landscapes of the reservation. They also document a historic culture that is rapidly changing.

The traditional home for the Navajo is the circular Hogan. The female Hogan is for living (see the painting by Don Louis Perceval), and the male Hogan is for cultural ceremonies. Throughout the Navajo Nation, Hogan's still dot the landscape. However, most of the tribal members now live in tract houses and trailers.



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Like the young girl in Conrad Burr's painting, Navajo children are still adorable, but today few dress in traditional attire, except for pow-wows and other ceremonial events. There are also still a lot of sheep, goats, and chickens on the reservation.

While much of the Navajo Nation is very arid, the red rock country on the Colorado Plateau is incredibly beautiful. The grandeur of the landscape is shown in the painting by William S. Darling. Even today, it is not unusual to see Navajos and their dogs out tending their small herds of sheep and goats.

Bureau of Reclamation employees have been working to improve living conditions for Navajo elders living in very isolated locations. My favorite painting in the show is by Logan Maxwell Hagege and it is a wonderful portrait of Susie Yazzie in traditional dress. All the elders that I have met have been gracious, but unfortunately, many do not speak English, so our verbal communication is very limited.

While three of the paintings below were executed during the early part of the twentieth century, I have also included contemporary photographs that demonstrate that some things have not changed in Navajoland.

Art Museum



"Navajo Hogan" by Don Louis Perceval (1930s)



"Guarding the Hogan" by Stacey Smith



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"Navajo Girl with Lamb" by Conrad Burr (1940s)



"Navajo Girl with Chicken" by Stacey Smith



"Canyon Scene" by Gerald Curtis Delano (early 20th century)



"Navajo Canyon Scene" by Stacey Smith



"Susie Yazzie" by Logan Maxwell Hagege (2012)



"Silvia ManyGoats" by Stacey Smith

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Administrative Support Council's 2012 Award Winners



Administrative Services Professional Nominees with Brent Rhees, Corine Morales, Janet Hunt, Radhika Harris, Ryan Curtis, Ann Gold

By Levi Hutchinson, ASC Senior Advisor

On April 9, 2013, the front office attended an all employees meeting held at the Provo Area Office. Regional Director, Larry Walkoviak, recognized and congratulated all of the office's nominees, then surprised Deborah Hilton with the Administrative Professional of the Year Award. The following day, the UC Regional Office held its Annual Spring Training and Awards Ceremony. This was a 1-day event, with area of field offices participating by video-teleconference and WebEx connections. The day started with the awards ceremony. Nominees for both categories were acknowledged by Deputy Regional Directors, Ann Gold and Brent Rhees. Ann and Brent announced the winners: Deborah Hilton and Ryan Curtis. Light refreshments were served and photographs were taken. The Administrative Support Council's (ASC) Board would like to extend their thankfulness to those in the area/field offices who helped with



refreshments in their respected offices. This was a team effort coordinating last minute schedule, program, and travel changes this year due to sequestration. However, using our technology worked out in our favor to continue holding this event. Training Officer, Dick Jorgenson, provided training on “Difficult Conversations”, which had us asking ourselves 3 important questions: (1) What happened, (2) What were the feelings, and (3) What was the outcome? The ASC members gained perspective on what makes conversations difficult and understood that everyone comes from different backgrounds. We listened to one particular clip by John Lund speaking about his parents and how they would non-verbally argue over taking out the garbage instead of just asking from the beginning and being clear. In the morning staff meeting on April 15th, the Regional Director thanked those who actually nominated employees and took the time to write up the above-and-beyond accomplishments. The following are excerpts taken from our winning narratives:



Administrative Professional of the Year

Deborah Hilton

Provo Area Office, Office of the Area Manager

She initiated and developed the Provo Pilot Rotation Program while serving on the UC Diversity Action Team (UCDAT); made a presentation regarding the success of the program to the UC Leadership Team, and it is now being adopted at the regional office due to her leadership and expertise; assumed additional duties assisting the Administrative Officer in scheduling all of the training for the entire office including required EEO/Diversity training for management; makes sure appropriate service awards are completed and presented timely; is organized, dependable, cheerful, adaptable, meticulous, and willing to do the work that is before her.



Administrative Services Professional of the Year

Ryan Curtis

UC Regional Office, Records Management Group

He created written overnight processing guidance and standardized forms to ensure consistency and increase accuracy; served on the UCDAT and IT Coordinators Team; encouraged usage of the electronic return receipt service to customers; is the go-to person for his willingness to explain cost savings of mailing options; his attention to detail has resulted untold cost savings to the agency; assisted Durango and Grand Junction offices during the holidays in scanning a backlog of documents to make them electronically available to staff; was instrumental in publicizing the Distinguished Diversity Enhancement Award by writing a UC Today article and soliciting nominations; he is the personification of a team player – always seeking to understand, considers other viewpoints, and addresses issues rather than complaints; he takes pride in being able to assist everyone.





Administrative Professional Nominees - Front Row: Trish Johnson, Jolene Jacobson, Sheila Darhower, Veronica Tietz, Linda Morrey, Ann Gold; Back Row: Brent Rhees, Josh Larson, Deborah Hilton, Linda Andra



Sheila Darhower, Linda Andra, Deborah Hilton, Larry Walkoviak, Linda Morrey, Curt Pledger, Josh Larson

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The Rise of VTC Usage in the Wake of Sequestration



By Sarah Casale
IT Specialist
Upper Colorado Region

Video Teleconference (VTC) usage is on the rise due to travel and training restrictions from sequestration. Because of the increased usage, we would like to take some time to address VTC etiquette and items for consideration during your next video conference.

1. **Adjust your camera!** Before calling into a video conference, take the time to familiarize yourself with the camera presets in your room (presets can be accessed by pressing the **Preset** button at the top of your Polycom remote followed by a number **0-9**). If the presets don't quite get the angle you want, you can use the **up/down/left/right arrows** on the remote to move the camera and the **zoom** buttons to fit all participants in the frame. You want to make sure that the camera angle selected includes everyone that will be participating in the VTC at your site, but is also zoomed in enough so the far site can tell you are human beings, not specks around a giant table. This may mean adjusting your seating arrangement so that the two participants are seated next to each other instead of across the room (as terrifying as that may be).
2. **Adjust the room lighting!** Although lighting options may be limited in the room you use, try to sit in a spot that puts the best lighting on your face. While you adjust your camera, make sure you are properly lit so the far site can see your wonderful face!



3. **Mute your mic!** Use the **Mute** button on the Polycom remote to mute your side when you are not talking. Just like in a telephone conference, background noises can interfere with the conference and can be quite annoying. If you must un-mute to make a comment, be sure to re-mute when you are done.
4. **Be conscious of side conversations and paper shuffling!** If you are in a large conference room where someone is presenting, make sure to keep all noise to an absolute minimum. Most VTC rooms are equipped with a single microphone system that is either muted or not muted. So any side noise made in the room gets transmitted with the presenter's voice (and often at the same volume).
5. **Don't forget that you are on camera!** Your actions and behavior are visible to all remote sites during a video conference. Adjust your clothing/appearance as necessary, and remember to conduct yourself as though everyone is in the room with you.

If you have any questions about video conferencing at your site, please contact your local IT staff.

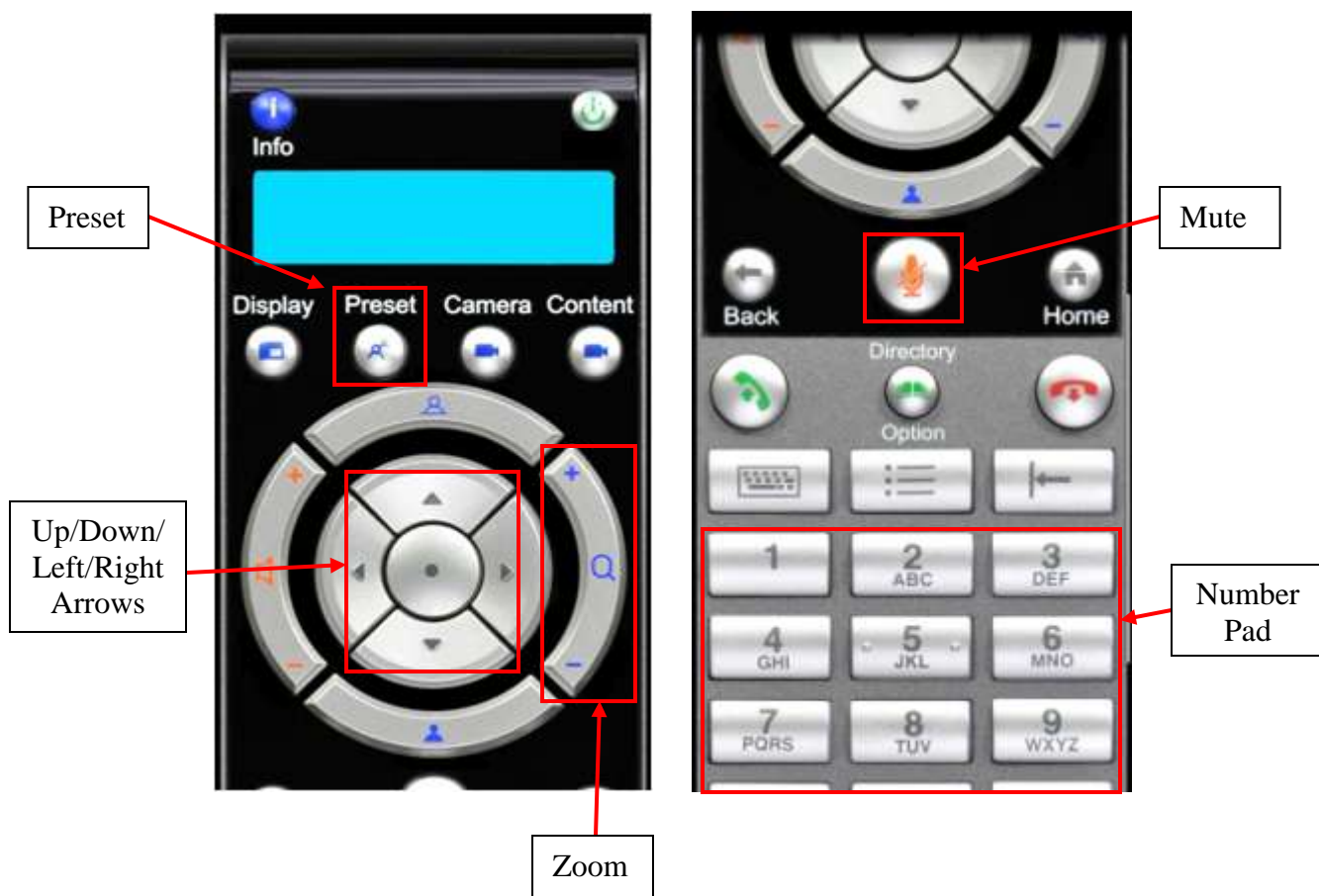
(NOTE: a diagram of the standard Polycom remote is shown on the next page for reference.)

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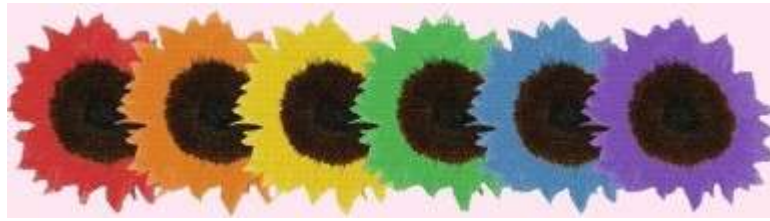
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VTC Remote:



Celebrate Diversity Month

Womens-Place



There is a Chinese proverb that says, "Tell me and I forget. Show me and I remember. Involve me and I understand." This should be the mantra for teaching diversity in our world. We can all talk until we're blue in the face, but you can never fully understand how another person lives until you have experienced a typical day in their life. However, we can take the initiative to learn about others, befriend someone outside your religion or nationality and educate ourselves in a way that helps us recognize the beauty and truth in every human.

A current example of conflict amongst those who are intolerant of others is happening in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and the surrounding areas right now. Just from watching the news, many people around the world have formed an opinion about those living in the Middle East. We see the insurgents fighting, the road side bombs and other atrocities committed daily, and it's hard not to think all the people living there are scary and evil. But the truth is, we only know about the ones we're shown. It's much like what is portrayed in movies about mobsters and gang members. Just because someone lives in the town where "bad guys" do "bad things" doesn't mean everyone who lives there is the same. Common sense tells us there are more good people than bad in our world, but the good are not getting attention for living their lives normally. That's not newsworthy. So the images put before us skew our views of the world outside our borders.

This is true no matter where one lives. In Europe, Americans are seen as dumb, crude "foreigners." Is that what we are? I'd like to think the vast majority of us are not, but it's a matter of perspective. Are all people from the South dumb? Are all people from California "surfer dudes?" Are all Italians from New York and New Jersey members of the mafia? Of course not. But stereotypes are formed and eventually become accepted as a sort of "truth" amongst the general population.

Our planet is filled with a rainbow of races and religions -- all equal in every way. It doesn't matter if you don't understand them all or even know they exist, but it does matter that you accept them all and do not judge any of them as less than worthy. We are all in this together, and our ignorance of other's beliefs is no excuse for intolerance in any form.

As we enter April, I'd like everyone to take some time to Celebrate Diversity Month. Take the time to INVOLVE yourself and others in learning about cultures and religions that are not part of your daily life. Involve your children, family, friends and neighbors; so that we may all gain a better understanding of our global family. Talk about, show examples of and become involved in celebrating diversity today and every day. There are endless possibilities of how you can do this, but here are a few examples if you need a bit of inspiration:



~Invite friends and family over for a pot luck meal where participants bring in dishes that represent their ethnicity or their favorite ethnic foods.

~Create a craft with your children that represents different cultures.

~Plan an event that brings together different ethnic groups to celebrate.

~Bring together different religious groups to learn about each other or pray for world peace together.

~Explore different cultures through art forms, poetry, music, crafts, traditional costumes, language, etc. Have an art show featuring local, diverse artists, or a poetry reading, or a concert.

~Rent movies that deal with diverse topics.

~Have a display or flag ceremony of different nations' flags.

~Read about a religion you have heard of but don't know much, if anything, about.

The fact the US has elected an African-American President gives me hope a higher level of acceptance has begun. Hopefully many more examples of progress in diversity will be made in the coming years. Diversity is what makes us who we are and what we will become. It is my hope and prayer that one day our children will live in a world where no one judges another based on their looks or beliefs. If we teach love and tolerance, this wish can become a reality.

What will you do to help change the world for the better today?



Host Julie is the proud mother of two little boys who are accepting of anyone and everyone willing to be their friend. She is happy they have not yet learned to be prejudice of others, and she hopes they will remain that way for the rest of their lives.

[Womens-Place](#)



National Playground Safety Week 2013

When the weather is nice outside and you want to take the kids to the local playground, do you know what to look for to make sure your playground is safe? Sometimes the risks don't appear as obvious as those associated with swimming or biking; but they do exist. You just need to know what to look for.

National Playground Safety Week, April 21-27, sponsored by the National Program for Playground Safety, is a time to focus on your children's outdoor play environments. Here are a few simple tips to help you recognize whether your local playground is safe and ready for your little ones.

Top Playground Safety Tips

Supervise Kids Using Playground Equipment

- Actively supervise children on playgrounds. It won't be hard – they'll probably be calling for you to watch them climb, jump and swing.
- Check playgrounds where your children play. Look for age-appropriate equipment and hazards, such as rusted or broken equipment and dangerous surfaces. Report any hazards to the school or appropriate local office.
- Teach children that pushing, shoving or crowding while on the playground can be dangerous.
- Dress appropriately for the playground. Remove necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings that can get caught on equipment and pose a strangulation hazard. Even helmets can be dangerous on a playground, so save those for bikes.
- Little kids can play differently than big kids. It is important to have a separate play area for children under 5.

Choose the Right Play Area Based on Your Child's Age

- Ensure that children use age-appropriate playground equipment. Separate play areas for bigger kids and children under 5 should be available and maintained.
- For babies who are mostly crawling or at best learning to walk, the play area should have a smooth and easy surface to walk on.
- If your baby has fairly good head control and can sit up with support (usually around 9 months old), give the baby (bucket-shaped) swings a try.
- Babies love slides but are too young to go down on their own. But they can slide down with your support. Just hold your baby all the way down and enjoy.



Ensure Safe Surfacing Beneath and Surrounding Playground Equipment

- Avoid playgrounds with non-impact absorbing surfaces, such as asphalt, concrete, grass, dirt or gravel.
- Recommended surface materials include: sand, pea gravel, wood chips, mulch and shredded rubber. Rubber mats, synthetic turf and other artificial materials are also safe surfaces and require less maintenance.
- Surfacing should be at least 12 inches deep and extend at least 6 feet in all directions around stationary equipment. Depending on the height of the equipment, surfacing may need to extend farther than 6 feet.
- For swings, make sure that the surfacing extends, in the back and front, twice the height of the suspending bar. So if the top of the swing set is 10 feet high, the surfacing should extend 20 feet.

Check That Playgrounds Are Inspected and Maintained by Qualified Personnel

- Double check with your school and child care center to make sure they have age-appropriate, well-maintained playground equipment.
- If there are any hazards in a public or backyard playground, report them immediately and do not allow children to use the equipment until it is safe.
- Report any playground safety hazards to the organization responsible for the site (e.g., school, park authority or city council).

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Retirement Planning - Required Payouts

By [Tammy Flanagan](#) National Institute of Transition Planning

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Last week's column, [Understanding Your TSP Options](#), left at least one commenter wanting to know more about the issue of required minimum distributions from the Thrift Savings Plan:

I would like to hear more about payout options because I don't think it's wise to leave money in the TSP past age 70 due to the withdrawal limitations and risk of an RMD (required minimum distribution) penalty. Can anyone convince me otherwise?

The Internal Revenue Code requires that you receive a portion of your TSP account beginning in the calendar year when your age reaches 70½ and you are separated from service. The portion you're required to take is called a required minimum distribution, or RMD.

Your entire TSP account is subject to the required minimum distributions. When you have traditional and Roth balances in your account, any withdrawals will be paid proportionally from each balance. Likewise, if you have an account that has both taxable and tax-exempt contributions, your distribution will be paid proportionally from each.

The TSP calculates RMDs based on your account balance and your age, using guidelines set by the IRS. The RMD computation will vary depending on the withdrawal option you've chosen, ranging from a series of monthly payments based on a life expectancy computation to a set dollar amount each month. There is also a lifetime annuity option and the choice of a partial or full lump sum payment. For more information, see the TSP publication [Important Tax Information About Your TSP Withdrawal and Required Minimum Distributions](#).

Active federal employees can continue to contribute to the TSP and are not subject to RMD rules until after they retire. So if you're still working past age 70 ½, you can continue to leave your money in the TSP.

Once you're retired and over 70 ½, the TSP will help you avoid the penalty for not taking the correct amount of distributions. For example, if you choose to receive your TSP balance as a series of monthly payments of \$200 per month, for example, and the RMD for that year based on your account balance and your age is \$5,000, then the TSP will send you a lump sum payment of \$2,600 at the end of the year to meet the \$5,000 withdrawal requirement for the year.

If you choose the withdrawal option that provides a series of monthly payments based on life expectancy, the TSP will automatically compute your payout based on the RMD amount when you turn 70.

Finally, the TSP notifies separated employees who will turn 70 the following year to let them know that they need to make a withdrawal election from their TSP to avoid the penalty for not meeting the RMD.

Your RMD payment cannot be transferred or rolled over into another Individual Retirement Account or employer plan. If you withdraw your account in a single payment or monthly payments in a year during which the RMD applies, before transferring any money the TSP will calculate your RMD amount and mail it directly to you (or, if applicable, to the savings or checking account designated to receive your direct deposits).

Here's [more information](#) from the TSP regarding RMD payments.

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Bison Connect Tip of the Week

By Sarah Casale
IT Specialist
Upper Colorado Region

Tip for the week of April 15, 2013:

Including Nicknames in the Bison Connect Directory. We have finally received approval and directions for how to include nicknames in Bison Connect! So, if you are one of the many people who go by a different name than your legal name (for example: Ed instead of Louis), please send an email request to your local IT staff to have the name field modified. If you have already sent a thousand emails about this since December... send one more! Also, please note that the displayed name must be a proper name. So please don't get creative!

Feel free to contact me at scasale@usbr.gov or Jeff Huffman at jhuffman@usbr.gov if you have any questions.

Additional Bison Connect resources are available through DOI.

For FAQs visit: <https://sites.google.com/a/doi.gov/bisonconnect-resource-site/training>

For How To's visit: <http://howto.doi.net/>

You may also contact the Help Desk at 801-524-3784 if you have any questions.

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Sharing Our Diversity by Sharing Your Recipes

From the kitchen of **Janet Hunt** – [Hamburger Soup](#)



1 pound of hamburger
1 large onion, chopped (You can substitute 2 TBSP dried minced onions instead of fresh)

Brown hamburger with onion, then add:

4 – 15oz cans of beef broth (you can also use 3 cans of consommé plus 2 cups of water instead)
1 large can of diced tomatoes
1 ½ tsp salt
1 ½ tsp thyme
1 bay leaf
6 carrots, peeled and sliced (or 1 cup of sliced carrots)
2 tsp parsley

Cook all ingredients together. Simmer for awhile, about 20 minutes before serving, add a small bag of macaroni (about 1 ½ cups of macaroni noodles). Cook until done. Just before serving, remove the bay leaf.

Serve with your favorite bread.

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In Transition

Former PN Region Employee Vernon “Vern” Groathouse dies

(Riverton, Wyo.) – Vernon “Vern” Groathouse, 92, of Riverton, died on Thursday, April 11, 2013, at Wind River Health Care. Service will be held on Saturday, April 20, 2013, at Trinity Lutheran Church with Pastor David Magruder officiating. Burial will follow at Mountain View Cemetery. A viewing will be held on Friday, April 19, 2013, from 5 to 7 p.m. at Davis Funeral Home.

Vernon Orval Groathouse was born on August 1, 1920, in Fairbury, Neb., to George and Ethel (Harrington) Groathouse. He spent his younger years living in southeastern Nebraska before the family moved to Wyoming. He attended schools in Fremont County and worked on the family farm.

He served in the Army during World War II. He was a member of the VFW.

He was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Riverton.

On November 10, 1946, he married Hilda Haun in Riverton. Together they raised two boys and one girl. He worked for the Bureau of Reclamation and at the Uranium mines in Jeffery City. Later he worked for the School District in Laramie, Wyo., for 30 years before moving back to Pavillion in 1985 where he worked for the town of Pavillion. A few years later he finally fully retired. In 2005 he and his wife, Hilda, purchased a home in Riverton and moved to the city. In 2010 they both moved to Homestead Assisted Living where they both lived until Hilda passed in November of 2010.

His family said that he loved to read western books, Louis L'Amour being one of his favorites. He also enjoyed getting outdoors, fishing and camping. Playing cards were an extracurricular activity that he thoroughly enjoyed and his favorites were pinochle and cribbage. Above all things he truly enjoyed having a cup of coffee and visiting with family and friends.

He is survived by his sons, Robert Groathouse and James Groathouse both of Riverton; his daughter, Jeannie Groathouse- Hiltz of Salt Lake City, UT; his grandchildren, Shannon and John Christensen, Dhana and Julie Groathouse, Rachella Hiltz, and Kevin and Misty Hiltz; and 7 great grandchildren.

He is preceded in death by his parents; his wife; and three brothers, Earl Groathouse, Charles Groathouse, and Perle Groathouse.

Memorials may be made to Homestead Assisted Living in care of Davis Funeral Home.

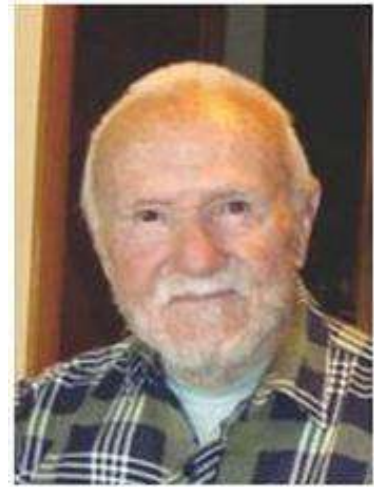
Services are under the direction of Davis Funeral Home. On-line condolences for the family may be made at www.TheDavisFuneralHome.com.

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Former Employee Robert (Bob) Stanley Oram dies

Robert Stanley Oram, 87, passed away on April 10, 2013 after a blessedly short battle with cancer. Robert, a.k.a. Bob Oram—alias “The Keota Kid”—was delivered into this life by Dr. D.G. Olson on January 29, 1926, in Keota, Colorado, and departed it on April 10, 2013, in Boulder City, Nevada. He was preceded from this life by Marion Ruth Dale, his wife of 34 years, in 1983, and his siblings Mary Naeda Oram in 1926, Charles Ford Oram Jr. in 1933, and Auriel Josephine Oram Sandstead in 2007. His parents were E. Fae Stanley (1890-1980) and Charles Ford Oram (1887-1956). He was married to Malu Tshitenga in 1985 until her return to Zaire in 1986. In 1991, he married soul mate E. Audrey Reynolds Oram. He is survived by Audrey, and his step-daughters Helena Le Roy, Nancy (Steve) Cottrell, Jana Allman, step-grandchildren Michelle, Brandi, Heather, Philip, Jennifer, Brett, Amy, step-great grandchildren Scotty, Blake, Hailey, Abby, step-great-great grandchild Joseph, and his sister Laura Pilkington.



At the age of 18, he enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, and after basic training on the west coast—and an expert rifle weapons qualification—was shipped to Iwo Jima where during deployment, “both his best buddies fell on either side of him”. After WWII, he was stationed in China until he was relieved from active duty in 1946. Upon his honorable discharge, he held the rank of Corporal. Since 5th grade, he knew he wanted to be a pilot, and thanks to the “G.I. Bill”, received his pilot’s license—and took his first aerial photograph of Keota—in 1947. During his flying years, he worked as a Ground Instructor rated in Aircraft, Engines, Meteorology, and Civil Air Regulations, as a commercial pilot for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and as a private pilot—eventually logging over 4,000 hours. He received his Civil Engineering degree from the University of Wyoming in 1963, and subsequently worked for the Bureau of Reclamation as a structural engineer. He had experience as a surveyor, transmission line inspector, substation construction advisor, and engineering division administrator for multiple projects that included the San Juan Chama Project and Nambé Falls Dam in New Mexico, the Inga Dam Inga-Shaba 500 kilovolt transmission line in Zaire, Africa, the Nueces River project and Choke Canyon Dam in Texas, and the Hoover Dam near Boulder City, Nevada before his retirement in 1985.

His life hobbies were water skiing, flying his Cub, and photography. He and Audrey loved sightseeing from the air—Bob taught Audrey all the basics of flying, “however, she never flew solo”. They enjoyed traveling and camping in their “Gypsy Wagon” and participating in the restoration of “Sunshine Corner” in Keota where they liked to vacation. During his lifetime, he documented numerous volumes of pictures he took of his family, friends, and travels; he also archived his mother’s photographs—recently bequeathing his entire collection to his second cousin Gwen Stanley, appointing her the “new custodian”. He was an experienced writer and good storyteller, and contributed to the Colorado newspaper The Fence Post. In 1987, he published Zaire, Yesterday and Today and dedicated it “to those who learn the customs of their neighbors wherever they may be and those who would promote peaceful communications worldwide”.

Service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Long Term Care Unit at the Boulder City Hospital, Boulder City, NV. 89005 Friends and family can sign an online memorial guestbook at www.bouldercityfamilymortuary.com

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What Is the Media Saying About Reclamation This Week?

[Colorado River Delta Restoration Is Ken Salazar's Keystone Water Achievement](#)

[Paonia River Park restoration completed](#)

[Relief for a Parched Delta](#)

[Forecasters issue red-flag warning for N.M.](#)

[Drought watch: farm water district to curtail some Middle Rio Grande water users](#)

[WATER LINES: Drought not over; poor supply forecast triggers Shoshone Call 'Relaxation'](#)

[SRP concerned with future of Navajo generating station](#)

[Sub-district wins ruling](#)

[Federal Contracts Awarded to Companies in New Mexico \(April 12\)](#)

[US House passes Tipton's small hydropower bill; Rep. Mike Coffman \(R-CO\) News Release](#)

[Valley Calendar](#)

[Central Utah Project money runs dry in president's budget](#)

[In our opinion: End this water war](#)

[Contractor recalls good time working on famous sand barge](#)

[End this water war](#)

[Utah to Nevada on attempted water grab. Not a chance](#)

[PVACD reaffirms opposition of priority call on Pecos River](#)

[Drought watch: Why the Pecos is in trouble, in one graph](#)

[Drought Affecting Valley Structures](#)

[Drought affects grocery costs | Albuquerque News - KOAT Home](#)

[Mexico agrees to release water to the US](#)

[Forecasters warn of critical fire weather across New Mexico](#)

[Drought poses challenges for chile growers in NM](#)

[Experts Weigh In On West's Water Issues](#)

[High Court Asks For US Input On Texas-NM Water Dispute](#)

[Perry urges the president to demand more water from Mexico](#)

[Mexico's water release termed a slap in the face by Valley water officials](#)

[Public Land Order No. 7812; Partial Revocation of a Secretarial Order Dated April 27, 1905; CO](#)

[Sally Jewell was sworn in as the 51st Secretary of the Interior on April 12, 2013. As Secretary of the Interior, Jewell leads an agency with more than 70,000 employees. Interior serves as steward for approximately 20 percent of the nation's lands, includi](#)

[Uncertainty over Mexico's Willingness to Pay Water Debt](#)

[House to Feds: Pressure Mexico to Release Water](#)

[New Mexico farmers expect tough times for crops](#)

[Drought conditions to continue for upcoming year](#)

[Jewell to be sworn in today in private ceremony](#)

[House passes bill to make it easier to produce hydropower from federal canals, ditches in West](#)

[US House passes Tipton's small hydropower bill - 04/11/2013 10:14 AM MDT](#)

[Coal plant could pour \\$13B to Navajo Nation economy through 2044](#)

[Jewell Will Handle \\$11.9 Billion Interior Budget in 2014 | Environment News Service](#)

[House passes bill to bolster Utah projects](#)

[Water conference to discuss 'viable future'](#)

[Emery County Progress - Water district gives 100 percent allocation for Joe's Valley - April 9, 2013](#)



[Goose Bay trailer owners take ordered eviction to court](#)

[CRMWD: If weather stays same, surface water will be pumped out by 2014](#)

[Officials: Quagga mussels found, but Lake Powell not colonized](#)

[Tensions Rise Amid Demise of Utah-Nevada Water Pact](#)

[Utah-Nevada Water Deal Falls Through After Gov. Refuses To Share Groundwater Resources](#)

[Amid Drought, Water Board in New Mexico Confronts State Over Supply](#)

[Mexican Government Authorizes Additional River Flow For U.S.](#)

[Stuff I wrote elsewhere: in the midst of drought, signs of water cooperation](#)

[Mexico agrees to send water north as Texas drought deepens](#)

[Cooperation key as drought worsens](#)

[Mexican Government Authorizes Additional Water Flow Into U.S.](#)

[Drought watch: water juggling on the Rio Grande](#)

[Texas looks at innovative ways to resolve its water woes](#)

[Mexico water release called a "pittance"](#)

[State Department says 'no word from Mexico' about water delivery](#)

[Colorado Weather Forecast: Spring snow returns to the Front Range](#)

[Relax, reservoir not drying up](#)

[Lake Roosevelt water levels staying high](#)

[Provo Reservoir Canal Enclosure and Trail Completed Local leaders celebrated the completion today of the Provo Reservoir Canal Enclosure, one of the most significant water projects in Utah. The celebration](#)

[Mexico's Release of Water into the Rio Grande](#)

[Climate Change Exacerbates Mexico's Growing Water Crises](#)

[INTERIOR: As Salazar starts packing, critics assess his conservation record \(Greenwire, 04/05/2013\)](#)

[Officials: Quagga mussels found, but Lake Powell not colonized - Your West Valley News: Topstory](#)

[Arizona warns boaters about invasive mussels](#)

[Drought watch: Chama releases begin](#)

[Snowpack soars after storms](#)

[Perry to Obama: Press Mexico for Water | The Texas Tribune](#)

[March precipitation well below normal](#)

[WATER LINES: Drought not over; poor supply forecast triggers Shoshone Call 'Relaxation'](#)

[Water wars loom as N.M. farmers demand priority call](#)

[Reclamation's Fiscal Year Budget Request is more than \\$1 Billion](#)

[President Proposes \\$11.9 Billion Budget for Interior](#)

[TUD wants promised NM water](#)

[Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Work Group –](#)

[Border congressmen applaud Mexico's release of water but push for more](#)

[2013 will be worst water year in a century in Doña Ana County, officials say](#)

[Water company hears good news at annual meeting](#)

[Texas Asks for Feds' Help Getting Water from Mexico](#)

[President's 2014 USGS Budget Proposal Strengthens Science](#)

[Central Utah Project money runs dry in president's budget](#)

[Senate confirms REI's Sally Jewell as Interior Secretary](#)

[Two Hydroelectric Power Development Bills Now in Senate Hands](#)

[Paonia River Park restoration completed](#)

[Colorado River water users juggle rights to up storage](#)

[Depleted water supply means reservoirs won't fill](#)

[Water rights 'relaxed' for Colorado River](#)

[As Climate Change Reduces Colorado River Communities Must Prepare – News Watch](#)

[A dry spring on the Colorado River](#)

[Colorado water users prepare for more drought](#)

[Folks, we've got a drought going on](#)

[Stuff I wrote elsewhere: The "futile call" – a water rights priority dilemma](#)

[Federal Drought Grants Announced - Page 2 - HispanicBusiness.com](#)

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Reclamation Trivia

Here's this week's set of questions:

1. The Provo Reservoir Canal Enclosure Project celebration commemorated a monumental effort to enclose the Provo Reservoir Canal (also known as the) with a diameter welded steel pipeline.
2. Nambe Falls Dam is located about feet upstream from which forms the sharp break between the Sangre de Cristo mountains on the east and the Espanola Basin on the west.
3. Secretary of the Interior, walked up the main steps of Interior to a crowd on the steps of the C Street entrance. Unlike predecessors, she to work today, from the West.

Last week, We asked,

1. This year marks the 43rd year in the support for environmental protection. Earth Day is observed on April 22 each year.
2. The Palo Verde Diversion Dam and diversion works were turned over to the Palo Verde Irrigation District for operation and maintenance on December 17, 1957.
3. From UC Today Vol 5 Issue 6 - Hero beavers of Willard Bay spill on mend at wildlife center.

Last winner was – **Kay Ellis – Four Corners Construction Office**

Please use this [link to send your answers](#). To be fair we will draw names from the winners and one person will receive a prize. We will reach into the prize bin for something suitable for the winner...as long as supplies last.

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